



Good Reasons to Publish in Clinical Toxicology

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EDITORIAL

Good Reasons to Publish in *Clinical Toxicology*

Clinical Toxicology is the only medical journal entirely devoted to the discipline of clinical toxicology. Its mission is to publish "original research, clinical observations, reviews, and editorial correspondence relevant to human poisoning including reproductive, occupational, environmental and analytic toxicology, and substance abuse." The nature of the material actually published during the years 1992-1996 reflects this mission (Table 1).

As the official publication of the American Academy of Clinical Toxicology and the European Association of Poisons Centres and Clinical Toxicologists, it is an international journal with worldwide readership. The geographic origin of the publications is shown in Table 2. The abstracts presented at the North American Congress of Clinical Toxicology, the largest scientific meeting in the world devoted solely to this discipline, are

published in *Clinical Toxicology*.

There are many criteria that can be used to evaluate the quality of a medical journal, each having specific strengths and weaknesses. One method is to categorize by experimental design. As there is no gold standard for proportion of different types of experimental design as a criterion for quality, and because these proportions would understandably vary amongst different medical specialties, it is best to compare journals. Since the majority of publications in *Clinical Toxicology* fall within the realm of acute poisonings (Table 1), it is logical to compare it with a journal that publishes a large number of similar articles. The best example is *Annals of Emergency Medicine*. During the years 1992-1996 inclusive, there were 300 and 160 original research medical toxicology articles published in *Clinical Toxicology* and *Annals of Emergency Medicine*, respectively.

Table 1

*Types of Publications in Clinical Toxicology
(1992-1996) by Subject*

General Category	Number
Acute poisonings	200
Occupational/environmental toxicology	59
Biologic toxins	31
Substance abuse	34
Chronic exposure	9
Adverse drug reaction	20
Other	19

Table 2

*Origin of Publications in Clinical Toxicology
(1992-1996)*

Continent of Origin	Number
North America	199
Europe	102
Asia	58
Australia	10
South America	2
Africa	1

Table 3

Experimental Design of Original Research Papers Published in Clinical Toxicology and Annals of Emergency Medicine (1992-1996)

	<i>Clinical Toxicology</i>		<i>Ann Emerg Med</i>	
	N	%	N	%
Case reports	129	43.0	64	40
Case series	106	35.3	51	31.9
Animal	22	7.3	29	18.1
<i>In vitro</i>	21	7.0	5	3.1
Poison control/epidemiology	11	3.7	0	0
Human volunteer	7	2.3	7	4.4
Case control	4	1.3	2	1.3
Randomized controlled trial	0	0	2	1.3
Total	300	100	160	100

They are classified according to experimental design in Table 3.

The proportions of case reports, case series, and case control studies are all similar. The higher percentage of poison control/epidemiology papers in *Clinical Toxicology* is expected, whereas the differences observed for animal (greater in *Annals of Emergency Medicine*) and *in vitro* (greater in *Clinical Toxicology*) studies were not. The relatively large number of case reports and case series and the small number of human volunteer, case control, and randomized controlled trials is a reflection of the descriptive nature of the discipline. This is further supported by computerized search of the literature for other randomized controlled trials conducted in this discipline during this era. Only one other was found.¹

Recently, leaders from both sponsoring societies met with the editor and the publisher with the goal of improving the quality of this already competitive periodical. The editorial board was reconstituted and job descriptions were rewritten. Administrative is-

ssues were addressed to further improve and shorten the review and editorial process to ensure the highest quality of published papers and the shortest possible time between submission and publication. The key partnership is comprised of those whom the journal serves. The publisher, editor, editorial board, and sponsoring societies hope that you share our determination to maintain and enhance *Clinical Toxicology* as the preeminent clinical toxicology journal.

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REFERENCE

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